

BOOK REVIEWS

CLOUD (P.), editor. *Adventures in Earth history*. San Francisco (W. H. Freeman & Co.), 1971. xv+992 pp., 345 figs. Price £8.20 (cloth), £3.70 (\$8.95) (paper).

This impressive volume of nearly 1000 pages is subtitled '... a volume of significant writings from original sources on cosmology, geology, climatology, oceanography, organic evolution, and related topics of interest to students of earth history, from the time of Nicolaus Steno to the present.' The scope and content of the book is hence very wide and the Editor has attempted to select and edit original works so that the student has ready access to them without having to turn to a large library.

In the Preface, the Editor explains that the purpose of the volume is to acquaint the student with real problems of geology by direct contact, as it were, with some of the people who have contributed to the subject facts, ideas, and concepts and who by so doing, have made it so fascinating.

One can readily imagine the problems facing the Editor of such a work, and Professor Cloud enlarges on the dilemma of deciding what should be included and why it was that eventually he restricted his selections to those written in English, and predominantly to those concerning North America. Some papers have been reduced in length, and this has been most skilfully achieved without detriment to the sense and style of the original.

The book has two parts: one dealing with principles, processes, and origins, while the other is concerned with the geological record. Each part is subdivided into sections, and each section contains about 8 or 9 papers pertinent to it. Professor Cloud gives an introduction to each section in which he outlines its scope, and comments on his reasons for including the selected articles. Equally revealing are his comments on papers he would like to have included had space and other constraints allowed. Supplemental reading lists accompany each section and take the interested reader further.

It would be invidious for a reviewer to criticize the subject matter of 84 separate authors and one hesitates also in commenting upon the selections that have been made. Each of us has his own ideas as to the selections he would make for such a book, and I have enjoyed thinking of the papers I would have chosen for such a compilation. My emphasis would doubtless have been biased towards European examples and I would have included significant contributions in the fields of petrology and mineralogy, and this would probably have required another volume! My prejudice should in no way detract from the balance Professor Cloud has achieved. The volume is a stimulating collection of original papers in which most will find something of interest. The book deserves a place on the reading lists of students wishing to obtain a broad view of cosmology, stratigraphy, palaeontology, and much else, and is reasonably priced.

A. C. BISHOP